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ABSTRACT

At the completion of the 1986-87 school year, the Albuquerque (New Mexico) Public Schools (APS) conducted a cohort survival and withdrawal study to follow-up 5,976 students who had begun the ninth grade within the district in 1983-84. Current records were matched with those from the 1983-84 school year to determine whether members of the identified cohort had graduated, were still enrolled within the APS, had dropped out, or had transferred to another school district. Findings indicate that: (1) 61.8% of the students had graduated from the APS; (2) 7.9% were still enrolled in the APS program; (3) 19.6% had dropped out (21.3% of the identified males and 17.9% of the females had dropped out); (4) although 8.4% more males than females began the ninth grade in the APS in 1983-84, 8.6% more females than males graduated by the end of the 1986-87 school year; (5) Eldorado High School had the highest percentage of students who had either graduated or were still enrolled, followed by Sandia and Valley high schools; and (6) Albuquerque High School had the lowest percentage of students who had either graduated or were still enrolled, followed by West Mesa and Highland high schools. The cohort dropout rates by ethnicity were: Asian and other--12.9%; Anglo--16.3%; Black--22.9%; Hispanic--23.8%; and Native American--29.3%. Ten percent of the cohort had transferred to other school districts; 24% of these students transferred to districts within the state, while 76% transferred outside the state. Three data tables and three graphs are provided. (TJH)

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COHORT SURVIVAL AND WITHDRAWAL STUDY DISTRICT REPORT

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SEPTEMBER, 1987

COHORT SURVIVAL AND WITHDRAWAL STUDY
DISTRICT REPORT
SEPTEMBER, 1987

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ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

Recent literature on the dropout phenomenon has suggested that cohort survival figures,[1] rather than annual dropout statistics, provide a more accurate indication of a school district's ability to maintain student enrollment in educational programs. At the completion of the 1986-87 school year, the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Department of Planning, Research, and Accountability (PRA), with the assistance of the Information Management Services Department, identified 5,976 students who had begun ninth grade with the District in 1983-84. Current student records were matched with those from the 1983-84 school year in order to determine whether members of the identified cohort: 1) had graduated; 2) were still enrolled within APS; 3) had dropped out; or 4) had transferred to another school district. The findings are summarized below.

- 61.8%, or 3,695 of the 5,976 identified students, had graduated from APS. Another 7.9% (474) were still enrolled in an APS program.

- 19.6%, or 1,174 identified students, had dropped out. 21.3% of the identified males had dropped out, compared to 17.9% of the females.

- Although there were 8.4% more males than females who began the ninth grade with APS in 1983-84, there were 8.6% more females than males who had graduated by the end of the 1986-87 school year.

- The cohort dropout rates by ethnicity were: Asian and other - 12.9%; Anglo - 16.3%; Black - 22.9%; Hispanic - 23.8%; and Native American - 29.3%.

- When rates for students who had graduated were combined with rates for students who were still enrolled, Eldorado High had the largest percentage of students who had either graduated or were still enrolled (78.5%), followed by Sandia (77.0%), and Valley (75.7%). Albuquerque High had the lowest percentage of students who had either graduated or were still enrolled (55.5%), followed by West Mesa (64.4%), and Highland (64.8%).

- A total of 633 (10%) of the identified cohort had transferred to other school districts. Of these, 152 (24%) transferred to districts within the state, while 481 (76%) transferred to districts outside of the state.

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[1]To obtain cohort survival figures, all students entering the ninth grade in an APS school were identified and tracked through four years of high school. The cohort survival rate represents the percentage of those identified students who had either graduated or were still enrolled four years later.

INTRODUCTION

In reporting dropout statistics, the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) has traditionally published figures which reflect the annual high school dropout rate. The annual dropout rate consists of the number of students who drop out of high school between the first day of summer vacation and the last day of the following school year. In an effort to present a more comprehensive view of the dropout phenomenon within the District, the APS Department of Planning, Research, and Accountability has, for the graduating class of 1987, conducted a longitudinal, or cohort, study of those students who began the 1983-84 school year as ninth graders within the district.

Cohort survival rates, in contrast to annual dropout figures, provide an indication of the proportion of entering freshmen within a district who either successfully complete a high school education or are still pursuing a diploma four years after beginning ninth grade. Unlike annual dropout rates, cohort survival rates are not complicated by students who transfer into district programs from outside the district or students who repeatedly withdrawal and re-enroll. For these reasons, cohort survival rates are preferred by many over annual dropout rates for determining a particular school district's ability to maintain students within its program of study.

In order to complete this study, it was necessary for the Department of Information Management Services to identify all students who were enrolled as ninth graders at the beginning of the 1983-84 school year. These students were matched by student number with the records of students who had either graduated or were still active within APS at the end of the 1986-87 school year, the year in which they would have graduated, had they completed all course work on schedule. For those students who were found to be inactive (no longer enrolled within APS) and who were found to have not graduated, withdraw codes were examined in order to differentiate between students who dropped out and students who transferred to another district. This report presents the findings of the longitudinal study, presenting figures classified by ethnicity, gender, and school.

GRADUATION AND WITHDRAWAL RATES BY ETHNICITY

A total of 5,976 students were identified as ninth graders within APS at the beginning of the 1983-84 school year. Of these, 3,184 (53.3%) were Anglo, 166 (2.8%) were Black, 2,235 (37.4%) were Hispanic, 164 (2.7%) were Native American, 93 (1.6%) were Asian or Other, and 134 (2.2%) had no identified ethnicity. Of these 5,976 students, 3,695 (61.8%) had graduated by the end of the 1986-87 school year. Another 474 (7.9%) were still enrolled in an APS school, while 152 (2.5%) had transferred to another New Mexico school district, and 481 (8.0%) had transferred to a district outside of New Mexico. A total of 1,174 (19.6%) of these students had not graduated, were no longer enrolled, and had not transferred to another school district.

Figure 1 displays the results of the longitudinal study for the District, categorized by ethnicity.

Figure 1

Cohort Graduation and Withdrawal Rates by Ethnicity

	GRADUATED		STILL ENROLLED		WITHDREW BEFORE GRADUATING		TRANSFERRED WITHIN STATE		TRANSFERRED OUT OF STATE	
ETHNICITY	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ANGLO (3,184)	2,105	66.1	207	6.5	520	16.3	73	2.3	279	8.8
BLACK (166)	89	53.6	15	9.0	38	22.9	2	1.2	22	13.3
HISPANIC (2,235)	1,268	56.7	224	10.0	533	23.8	64	2.9	146	6.5
NATIVE AMERICAN (164)	86	52.4	13	7.9	48	29.3	8	4.9	9	5.5
ASIAN and OTHER (93)	69	74.2	2	2.2	12	12.9	0	0.0	10	10.8
NO ETHNIC CODE (134)	78	58.2	13	9.7	23	17.2	5	3.7	15	11.2
DISTRICT TOTALS (5,976)	3,695	61.8	474	7.9	1,174	19.6	152	2.5	481	8.0

In examining graduation rates by ethnicity, the highest rate was for Asian students (74.2%), followed by Anglos (66.1%), Hispanics (56.7%), and Blacks (53.6%). Native Americans demonstrated the lowest graduation rate (52.4%). Conversely, Native Americans had the highest rate of withdrawing before graduating (29.3%), followed by Hispanics (23.8%), Blacks (22.9%), and Anglos (16.3%). The lowest rate of withdrawing before graduating was demonstrated by Asian and others (12.9%).

GRADUATION AND WITHDRAWAL RATES BY GENDER

Although there were 240 more males than females who began the ninth grade with APS in 1983-84 (a difference of 8.4%), 153 more females than males had received diplomas after four years of study (a difference of 8.6%).

Figure 2 displays the results of the longitudinal study for the District, categorized by gender.

Figure 2

Cohort Graduation and Withdrawal Rates by Gender

	GRADUATED		STILL ENROLLED		WITHDREW BEFORE GRADUATING		TRANSFERRED WITHIN STATE		TRANSFERRED OUT OF STATE	
GENDER	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
MALE (3,107)	1,770	57.0	321	10.3	661	21.3	91	2.9	264	8.5
FEMALE (2,867)	1,923	67.1	153	5.3	513	17.9	61	2.1	217	7.6
NO GENDER CODE (2)	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
DISTRICT TOTALS (5,976)	3,695	61.8	474	7.9	1,174	19.6	152	2.5	481	8.0

As these figures reveal, females were found to have a graduation rate of 67.1%, while males graduated at a rate of 57.0%. More than twice as many males as females (321 males compared to 153 females) were still enrolled beyond the date when they were scheduled to have graduated. More than one fifth (21.3%) of all males who were enrolled in APS in the ninth grade withdrew before graduating. This figure was slightly lower (17.9%) for females.

GRADUATION AND WITHDRAWAL RATES BY HIGH SCHOOL

A high school's cohort survival rate is decreased by three factors: 1) the number of students who are behind in credits after four years of high school; 2) the number of students who transferred to other school districts; and 3) the number of students who withdrew from school completely before graduating (dropped out). Although some of the students who either graduated or were still enrolled may have changed schools within the district, they were tracked, and figures compiled, according to the

school where they began the ninth grade. Due to mobility within the district, these figures are a better indication of the overall holding power of the district than they are of the holding power of individual high schools.

Figure 3 displays the results of the longitudinal study for the District, categorized by high school.

Figure 3

Cohort Graduation and Withdrawal Rates by High School

	GRADUATED		STILL ENROLLED		WITHDREW BEFORE GRADUATING		TRANSFERRED WITHIN STATE		TRANSFERRED OUT OF STATE	
SCHOOL	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ALBUQUERQUE (487)	239	49.1	31	6.4	115	23.6	16	3.3	86	17.7
CIBOLA (501)	327	65.3	28	5.6	96	19.2	21	4.2	29	5.8
DEL NORTE (627)	403	64.3	56	8.9	126	20.1	12	1.9	30	4.8
ELDORADO (724)	505	69.8	63	8.7	77	10.6	7	1.0	72	9.9
HIGHLAND (608)	352	57.9	42	6.9	132	21.7	15	2.5	67	11.0
MANZANO (732)	455	62.2	78	10.7	121	16.5	20	2.7	58	7.9
RIO GRANDE (590)	319	54.1	66	11.2	164	27.8	17	2.9	24	4.1
SANDIA (625)	455	72.8	26	4.2	93	14.9	5	0.8	46	7.4
VALLEY (416)	287	69.0	28	6.7	72	17.3	8	1.9	21	5.0
WEST MESA (606)	341	56.3	49	8.1	142	23.4	30	5.0	44	7.3
OTHERS (60)	12	20.0	7	11.7	36	60.0	1	1.7	4	6.7
DISTRICT TOTALS (5,976)	3,695	61.8	474	7.9	1,174	19.6	152	2.5	481	8.0

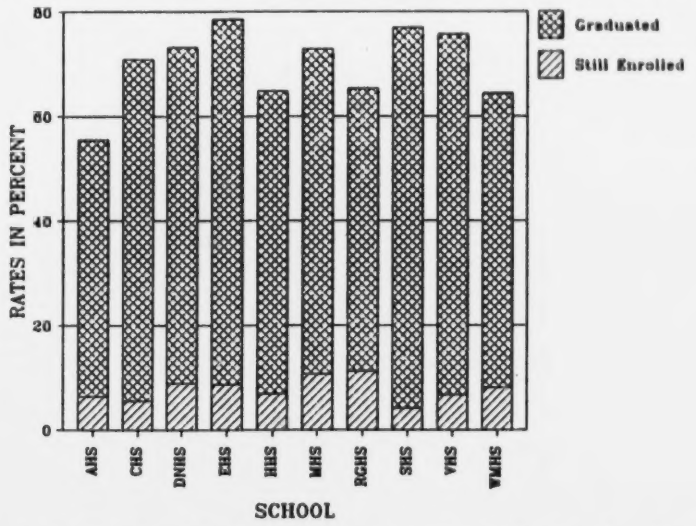
The highest graduation rates for the period of study were produced by Sandia High (72.8%), followed by Eldorado (69.8%), and Valley (69.0%). The lowest graduation rates were produced by Albuquerque High (49.1%), followed by Rio Grande (54.1%), and West Mesa (56.3%). Eldorado High had the smallest proportion of its students withdrawing without graduating (10.6%), followed by Sandia (14.9%), and Manzano (16.5%). Rio Grande had the largest proportion of students leaving without graduating (27.8%), followed by Albuquerque (23.6%), and West Mesa (23.4%).

According to these figures, students at some high schools were more successful in completing their required credits within four years than students at other high schools. This contributes to a higher graduation rate, but does not necessarily reflect increased holding power. In order to control the effects of students who fall behind in credits but remain in school, graduation rates and rates for those students still enrolled should be examined together.

Figure 4 examines the combined graduation rates and rates for students who are still enrolled.

Figure 4

Percent Of Students Either Graduated Or Still Enrolled



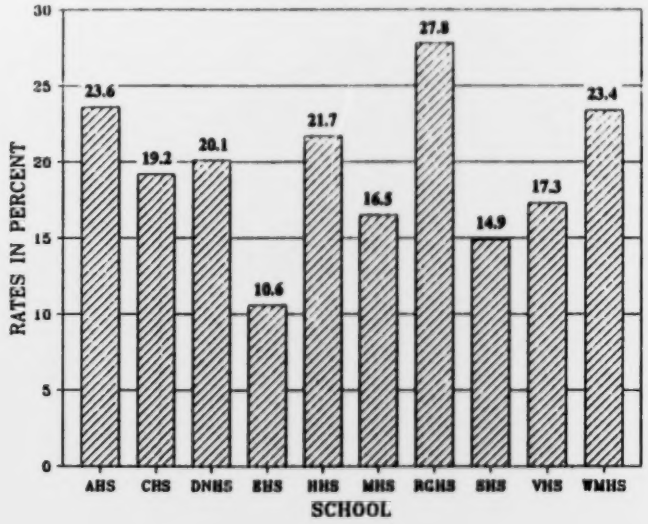
A total of 470 students, or 7.9% of the initially identified cohort, were still enrolled at the time of the study. This figure represents students who were behind in credits at the time their cohort was scheduled to graduate. Sandia High had the lowest number of students from their initial cohort who were still in school (4.2%), followed by Cibola (5.6%), and Albuquerque (6.4%). Rio Grande had the highest number of initial cohort members who where still enrolled in an APS school (11.2%), followed by Manzano (10.7%), and Del Norte (8.9%). A low percentage of students still enrolled could be due either to the majority of students having graduated on time (in the case of those schools with high graduation rates), or students' dropping out after falling behind in credits (in the case of those schools with low graduation rates).

After combining rates for students who had graduated with rates for students who were still enrolled, Eldorado High had the largest percentage (78.5%), followed by Sandia (77.0%), and Valley (75.7%). Albuquerque High had the lowest percentage (55.5%), followed by West Mesa (64.4%), and Highland (64.8%).

Table 5 displays the cohort dropout rates for each high school, as of the end of the 1986-87 school year. Unlike annual dropout figures, these figures represent the proportion of beginning ninth graders at each school who dropped out before completing high school. The figures are attributed to the schools where the students were enrolled as ninth graders. However, some students may have transferred to a different APS school before dropping out.

Figure 5

School By School Dropout Rates For Identified Cohort

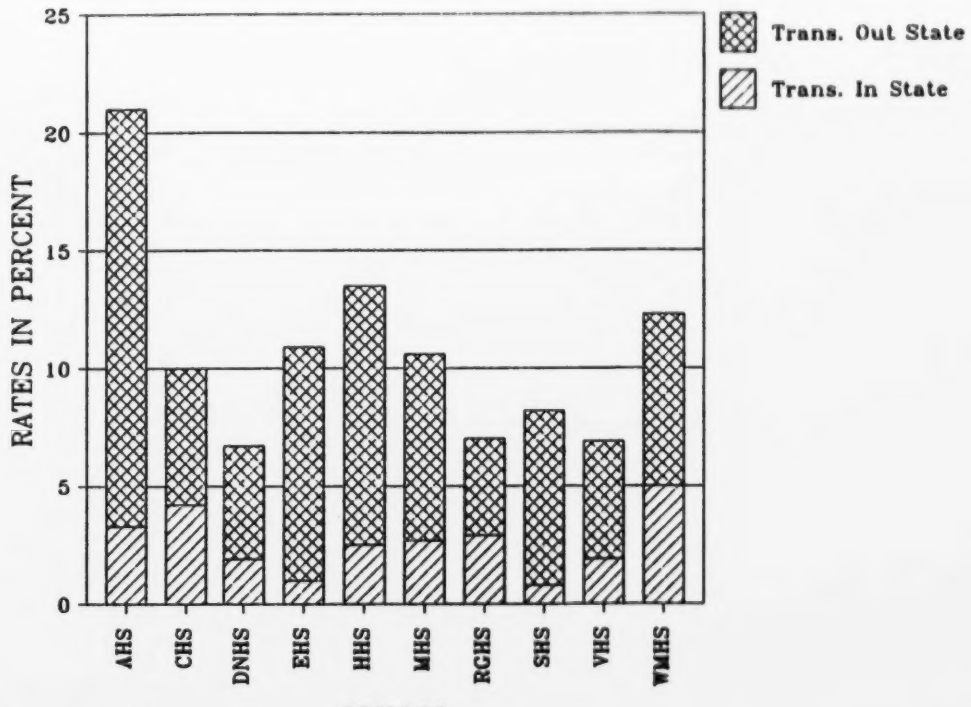


These figures indicate that Rio Grande's cohort dropped out at the highest rate (27.8%), followed by Albuquerque (23.6%), and West Mesa (23.4%). Eldorado's cohort dropped out at the lowest rate (10.6%), followed by Sandia (14.9%), and Manzano (16.5%).

Figure 6 represents those members of the cohort who were withdrawn from their respective schools during the time of study under codes which indicated that they transferred to other school districts. The cross-hatched section of the bar represents the proportion of students transferred out-of-state, while the lower portion of the bar represents those students who were transferred to other school districts within New Mexico.

Figure 6

School By School Transfer Rates For Identified Cohort



Albuquerque High clearly lost the greatest number of cohorts to other school districts (21%), followed by Highland (13.5%), and West Mesa (12.3%). Del Norte High had the fewest number of cohorts transfer to other school districts (6.7%), followed by Valley (6.9%), and Rio Grande (7.0%).

CONCLUSION

In an effort to more clearly determine the extent to which students within the Albuquerque Public School District remain within its high school programs, an initial cohort of 5,976 students, representing all the students who began ninth grade with the district in the 1983-84 school year, was identified. The records of these students were examined at the completion of the 1986-87 school year to determine whether these students: 1) had graduated; 2) were still enrolled within APS; 3) had dropped out; 4) or had transferred to another school district. Separate figures were compiled by student ethnicity, student gender, and school where students were initially enrolled.

The District four-year graduation rate for the identified cohort was 61.8%, with 57.0% of the identified males graduating and 67.1% of the identified females graduating. An additional 7.9% of the identified cohort was still enrolled in an APS school. In examining graduation rates by ethnicity, it was found that 74.2% of the Asian and other students graduated on schedule, followed by 66.1% of Anglos, 56.7% of Hispanics, 53.6% of Blacks, and 52.4% of Native Americans.

The District dropout rate for the identified cohort was 19.6%, with 21.3% of the identified males dropping out and 17.9% of the identified females dropping out. In examining dropout rates by ethnicity, it was found that 29.3% of the identified Native Americans dropped out, followed by 23.8% of Hispanics, 22.9% of Blacks, 16.3% of Anglos, and 12.9% of Asian and other students. Ten and one-half percent of the identified cohort had transferred to a different school district.

The cohort which began high school at Sandia High demonstrated the highest graduation rate (72.8%), followed by Eldorado (69.8%), and Valley (69.0%). The lowest graduation rate was demonstrated by the cohort which began high school at Albuquerque High (49.1%), followed by Rio Grande (54.1%), and West Mesa (56.3%).

NOTES

ETHNICITY KEY (definitions provided by the New Mexico State Department of Education)

Anglo - any group or individual of European heritage other than Spanish. This includes British, Irish, Scandinavian, Germanic, French, Italian, Slavic, etc. groups.

Black - any group or individual of Negroid heritage.

Hispanic - any group or individual of Hispanic heritage. This includes South American, Central American, Spanish, Puerto Rican, and Cuban groups.

Native American - any group or individual of American Indian heritage. This includes Navajo, Apache, or one of the Pueblo groups.

Asian and Other - this includes Oriental, North African, East Indian, Arab, etc. designations.